

**REMARKS**

Claims 2-10 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 7 and 9 have been amended. Support for the amendments to claims 7 and 9 can be found at, for example, page 13, line 20 to page 14, line 22 and paragraph [0014]. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

**I. Rejection Under §103(a)**

The Office Action rejects claims 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 02-172709 to Uesugi et al. (hereinafter "Uesugi") in view of International Patent Application Publication No. WO 02/102579 to Suda. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Suda does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in independent claim 7. Specifically, the Examiner merely asserts that Suda teaches or suggests an apparatus for forming tire components including a receiving roller (forming drum 11) capable of rotating in an opposite direction to the transfer drum (transfer drum 12) (Figs. 1 and 3-1 to 4-2). However, Suda fails to teach or suggest high and low adhesion sections. Instead, at col. 4, lines 64-67, Suda teaches that the strips (2) are attached to the circumference of the transfer drum (12) by suction exerted thereon by the vacuum mechanism (20). As such, Suda's suction is not equivalent to the recited "high adhesion sections" and "low adhesion sections." Additionally, since Suda fails

to disclose high and low adhesion section, Suda also fails to teach or suggest that the strips (2) are held solely by low adhesion sections when being transferred from the transfer drum (12) and the forming drum (11) or that the strips (2) are held on the transfer drum (12) by mainly high adhesion sections. Thus, Suda does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in independent claim 7.

Uesugi does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in independent claim 7. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Uesugi teaches or suggests a plurality of low adhesion sections (asserted to be equivalent to portions 30) with a low adhesion force and a plurality of high adhesion sections (asserted to be equivalent to dense portions 32) with a high adhesion force, said low adhesion sections and said high adhesion sections being alternately arranged in the width direction of the transfer drum (Figs. 1-4 and paragraphs [0017] to [0030]). However, the adhesion sections of Uesugi (portions 30 and dense portions 32) are not equivalent to the recited "high adhesion sections"

and "low adhesion sections" because the high adhesion sections of Uesugi (dense portions 32) are not provided with projections which move the high adhesion sections (dense portions 32) radially inwards of the low adhesion sections (portions 30). Instead, Uesugi merely discloses a low adhesion portion (portions 30) and a high adhesion portion (dense portions 32) (paragraph [0029]). As is illustrated in Fig. 1, Uesugi merely describes a tire molding drum (10) upon which layers of alternately high and low adhesion portions (dense portions 32 and portions 30, respectively) are disposed in the circumferential direction. There is nothing in Uesugi which teaches or suggests a high adhesion portion having projections moving the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections. Additionally, Uesugi fails to disclose transfer from a transfer drum (central drum 14) to a receiver drum. However, Uesugi does disclose (paragraph [0026]) that the sheet member (20) can be easily separated from the elastic drum band (20) (which is arranged on the central drum 14) by mainly holding the sheet member (22) in the portion (32) (i.e. the high adhesion portion). This is in direct conflict with the recited sheet member which is separated from the drum by movement of the high adhesion sections radially inward so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections during transfer from the transfer drum to the receive drum. Thus, Uesugi does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in independent claim 7.

Applicant does not concede that Uesugi or Suda, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the features of dependent claims 4-6, 8 and 9. However, it is unnecessary to

separately discuss the features recited in the dependent claims given the existence of clear and distinct features in independent claim 7.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Uesugi in view of Suda as applied to claims 4-9 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,624,780 to Nishimori et al. (hereinafter "Nishimori"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is based on the assertion that the combination of Suda and Uesugi teaches or suggests all the features of claim 7, from which claims 2 and 3 depend. As discussed above, the combination of Suda and Uesugi does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 7.

Nishimori fails to make up for the deficiencies of Suda and Uesugi. Specifically, Nishimori does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in claim 7. Nishimori teaches an image forming method in which a recording material is passed between a moving fixing member and a pressure member (col. 3, lines 4-15). Thus, Nishimori is directed to the application of a toner image on a recording member (co. 4, lines 34-47). However, there is no disclosure in Nishimori for high and low adhesion sections, wherein the high adhesion sections can move radially inward of the low adhesion sections during transfer of a sheet member.

Thus, the deficiencies of the combination of Suda and Uesugi are not cured by the addition of Nishimori, and the rejection of claim 7 should be withdrawn. Claims 2 and 3 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 7, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejects claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Uesugi in view of Suda as applied to claims 4-9 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,888,720 to Habert. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

This rejection is based on the assertion that the combination of Suda and Uesugi teaches or suggests all the features of claim 7, from which claims 4-9 depend. As discussed above, the combination of Suda and Uesugi does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 7.

Habert fails to make up for the deficiencies of Suda and Uesugi. Specifically, Habert does not teach or suggest "the high adhesion sections connected to projections that can alternatively move the high adhesion sections radially inwards of the low adhesion sections, wherein when the sheet member is transferred from the transfer drum and applied to the receiver drum, the high adhesion sections move radially inwards of the low adhesion sections so that the sheet member is held solely by the low adhesion sections and when the sheet member is being held on the transfer drum, the sheet member is held in place mainly by the high adhesion sections," as recited in claim 7. Habert teaches radial expansion and contraction of a drum by a cam means (having cam followers) which is rotatably actuated by a drive shaft. The rotation of the drive shaft causes each cam follower to be guided within a groove, thus allowing expansion and contract of segments simultaneously (col. 2, lines 47-64). However, there is no disclosure in Habert for high and low adhesion sections, wherein

the high adhesion sections can move radially inward of the low adhesion sections during transfer of a sheet member.

Thus, the deficiencies of the combination of Suda and Uesugi are not cured by the addition of Habert, and the rejection of claim 7 should be withdrawn. Claims 4-9 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 7, as well as for the additional features recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

## **II. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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